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Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-second session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Item 4 (b)

Programme 5
Legal affairs

1. At its 9th meeting, on 17 June 2002, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. It had before it proposals in respect of programme 5, Legal affairs (A/57/6 (Prog 5)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced programme 5 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Satisfaction was expressed with the services rendered by the Office of Legal Affairs to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Queries were raised on the revisions related to subprogramme 4, Law of the sea and ocean affairs. The view was expressed that General Assembly resolutions 56/12 on oceans and the law of the sea and 56/13 on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks did not contain specific mandates to warrant the revisions

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4. Questions were raised regarding the organization of the office and the implementation of the programme of action within the three groups of countries under its aegis, as well as the relationships with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries. The representative of the Secretary-General clarified that his office was working in close coordination with all the entities of the United Nations system involved. He indicated that the main responsibility of his office was to carry out effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and the relevant programmes for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, while UNCTAD focused on research and analytical activities, technical assistance and capacity-building. In that respect it was mentioned that the recurrent report on the least developed countries would continue to be prepared under the responsibility of UNCTAD but on a biennial as opposed to an annual basis.

5. It was felt that a reference to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002) should be made in the overall orientation.

6. It was noted that the strategy was well spelled out, particularly with regard to maintaining of linkages with other parts of the United Nations system, and that it was in full accordance with the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" (A/56/645). It was also noted that a strategy to avoid duplicative work should be included in order to reflect the creation of the Office of the High Representative.

7. It was noted that, in several paragraphs (e.g., paras. 26.5 and 26.7 (a)), reference was made to the least developed countries only and not to the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States. It was considered that the document could be improved by including equal references to all three groups of countries considered by the programme. It was also suggested that the list of legislative mandates should be expanded in that respect.

8. It was mentioned that one of the priorities of the Office of the High Representative during the period 2002-2005 would be the preparation, coordination and follow-up of the International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (General Assembly resolution 56/180, para. 13) and that the role of the Office of the High Representative in the coordination and the involvement of all United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in the preparatory process would be critical to the success of the meeting.

9. The view was expressed that one of the objectives of the programme was to assist the least developed countries in graduating from that category. Another view was that, while graduation was an important concept, it did not mean an automatic improvement of the conditions of life of the people concerned; what was important was to assist countries in improving their social indicators such as health, education, etc., so as to measure the progress made in the conditions and quality of life of their people.

10. The view was expressed that the indicators of achievement should be clear, precise and quantifiable in order to truly measure the progress achieved and the impact of activities. It was suggested that paragraph 26.9 should be expanded in that respect.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the text proposed by the Secretary-General for the new programme 26, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, for inclusion in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, with the following modifications:**

Paragraph 26.4

In the first sentence, delete the words "and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General entitled 'Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration' (A/56/326)".

Paragraph 26.5

At the end of the paragraph, replace the words "reverse the trend by assisting countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action" with the words "help the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to progress towards the achievement of the goals by assisting them in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as well as the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States."

Paragraph 26.6

Insert the words "the follow-up and coordination of" after the words "substantive responsibility for".

Paragraph 26.7 (a)

After "2001-2010", insert the phrase ", the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States".

Paragraph 26.7 (j)

After the word "Assisting", insert the phrase ", as appropriate,".

Paragraph 26.7 (k)

After the words "of these three groups", insert the phrase ", as well as other developing countries,".